

<b>Report title: Proposed Appointment of the PFCC's Head of Finance</b>	
<b>Report to:</b> Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
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<b>Date:</b> 10 December 2020	<b>For:</b> Recommendation by the Panel
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<b>County Divisions affected:</b> All Essex	

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Through a rigorous recruitment process, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) has identified a duly qualified candidate to propose to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel as the PFCC's permanent Head of Finance. As part of the selection process, the PFCC must notify the Panel of the proposed appointment, along with the information set out under the sub-headings in section 3 below. The Panel is required to review the proposed appointment via a confirmation hearing and to make a report to the PFCC in this regard, including a recommendation as to whether or not the candidate should be appointed. The purpose of this report is to assist the Panel in this process. The proposed candidate will also be attending the confirmation hearing to answer any questions posed of them by the Panel.
- 1.2 The PFCC may either accept or reject the Panel's recommendation and must notify the Panel of their decision.

## 2. Recommendations

That the Panel:

- Reviews the proposed appointment of Julia Berry ("the candidate") as the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's (PFCC's) permanent Head of Finance, and
- Makes a report to the PFCC in this regard, including a recommendation as to whether or not the candidate should be appointed.

## 3. Context/Summary

- 3.1 The PFCC is required always to have in place a person to be responsible for the proper administration of their financial affairs, who must be a member of an accountancy body specified in section 113 of the Local Government Act 1998. Such person will fulfil the duties outlined in section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 on behalf of the PFCC, so is often referred to as "the Section 151 Officer".

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- 3.2 The PFCC's late Treasurer, Charles Garbett, was the Section 151 Officer to the PFCC both in their capacity as the Police and Crime Commissioner and in their capacity as the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (PFCCFRA). During his illness and immediately following his passing, the then Financial Scrutiny Officer to the PFCC stepped up into the role of Acting Section 151 Officer to the PFCC, whilst an officer within the Fire and Rescue Service stepped up to fulfil the role of Acting Section 151 Officer to the PFCCFRA. As part of the PFCC's staffing review carried out in 2019, the financial management arrangements with the Fire and Rescue Service were revisited and it was agreed that there should continue to be separate Section 151 Officers for the two legal entities, but with a senior post within the PFCC's establishment overseeing the development and implementation of the Commissioner's overall strategic financial vision across their office, Essex Police and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.
- 3.3 Recruitment commenced to the role of Chief Financial Officer to the PFCCFRA, and the Police, Fire and Crime Panel recommended an appointment to the Commissioner in December 2019, who took up post in January 2020. Meanwhile, within the PFCC's office, consultation was undertaken with staff to remove both the Treasurer and Financial Scrutiny Officer roles and to create two new posts of Strategic Head of Performance and Resources (responsible for strategic financial oversight, performance and scrutiny, compliments and complaints, and commissioning) and a Head of Finance. The Head of Finance will be the PFCC's professional advisor on financial matters and will assume responsibility for the administration of the PFCC's financial affairs under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, section 73 of the Local Government Act 1985 and section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1998. They will have a personal fiduciary duty to local taxpayers as they have responsibility for securing the efficient use of public funds, including revenue derived from the police precept. This includes requirements and formal powers to safeguard lawfulness and propriety in expenditure under section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1998, as amended by paragraph 188 of Schedule 16 to the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 impose further responsibilities. Taken together, and considered in the context of the Policing Protocol 2011, this means that the PFCC's Head of Finance will have several duties and accountabilities, including:
- Responsibility for the strategic direction and scrutiny of the PFCC's budget, including advising the PFCC on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of financial reserves.
  - Ensuring that the financial affairs of the PFCC are properly administered and that financial regulations are observed and kept up to date.
  - Ensuring regularity, propriety, feasibility and value for money in the use of public funds.
  - Advising on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety, probity and the budget, and supporting and advising the PFCC and their staff in their respective roles.
  - Advising the PFCC on the application of value for money principles by the police force to support the PFCC in holding the Chief Constable to account for efficient and effective financial management.

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- Ensuring that the funding required to finance agreed programmes is available from central Government, precept, other contributions and recharges.
  - Reporting to the PFCC, the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and the PFCC's external auditor if it appears that expenditure is likely to exceed the resources available to meet that expenditure.
  - Ensuring the production of the statement of accounts of the PFCC and confirming that they present a true and fair view of the financial position of the PFCC at the end of the financial year to which it relates and of the PFCC's income and expenditure for that financial year.
  - Ensuring receipt and scrutiny of the statement of accounts of the Chief Constable and ensuring production of the group accounts.
  - Liaising with the external auditor.
  - Ensuring the maintenance of an efficient and effective internal audit function.
  - Advising, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, on the safeguarding of assets, including risk management and insurance.
  - After consulting with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, to report to the PFCC, the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and the PFCC's external auditor any unlawful, or potentially unlawful, expenditure by the PFCC or their officers.
  - Contributing to the corporate management of the PFCC's office, particularly through the provision of professional financial advice.
  - Providing financial information to the media, members of the public and the community.
- 3.4 Whilst staff consultation, assimilation and ring fencing were completed and external recruitment to the post of Strategic Head of Performance and Resources took place, the Section 151 Officer role been covered through various interim arrangements which have been reported previously to the Panel. The PFCC is now pleased to recommend a permanent appointment to the Panel.
- 3.5 The candidate
- The PFCC proposes to appoint Julia Berry, an ACCA qualified accountant, as their Head of Finance.
- 3.6 The criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate for the appointment
- The criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate is set out in the job profile attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.7 Due to the seniority and strategic importance of the post, the PFCC worked with a specialist agency to attract and select a suitable candidate for the role. Three specialist recruitment agencies responded to an invitation for expressions of interest in running a recruitment campaign for the PFCC's new Head of Finance and Hays Senior Finance was assessed as offering the best value for money and to have the best credentials to complete the task, having previously placed senior finance leads in a number of local authorities in Essex, Southend, Cambridgeshire and London as well as recruiting the Operational Director of Finance for the City of London police force and the Chief Executive to the Devon and Cornwall PCC.

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- 3.8 The post was advertised from 10 October to 3 November 2020. The advert text is attached for the Panel's information at Appendix 2.
- 3.9 The attraction approach included a targeted search (conducted through networking / headhunting and engaging with Hays' existing database), online advertising and a social media campaign. The role was advertised on external job boards, including PFJobs and The Telegraph, as well as on Hays' own website. A branded microsite was built and publicised by both Hays and the PFCC.
- 3.10 Why the candidate satisfies the criteria
- Potentially suitable candidates were initially screened by Hays Senior Finance. Following this initial stage, Hays proposed a long list of five candidates to the PFCC, of whom three were shortlisted for interview. One withdrew from the process shortly before the interview, having accepted another position elsewhere. Two candidates therefore went through to the final stage prior to the Panel's confirmation hearing.
- 3.11 The formal selection process was held on 17 November 2020 and included a presentation exercise and assessment panel interview. For the presentation, candidates were asked to respond to the question "What do you consider to be the main risks and challenges faced by the PFCC over the next two to three years and, if appointed, how would you utilise your role to help the PFCC in dealing with those risks and challenges?" The interview questions tested the candidate's behaviours against those from the College of Policing's Competency and Values Framework (CVF) set out in the job profile, within the context of a financial leadership role.
- 3.12 The assessment panel consisted of Roger Hirst (Police Fire and Crime Commissioner), Pippa Brent-Isherwood (Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer), Janet Perry (Strategic Head of Performance and Resources) and Jonathan Swan (Independent Chair of the PFCC's and Chief Constable's Joint Audit Committee). The appointment process was conducted with the support of professional advice from an HR Partner within the Human Resources service provided to both Essex and Kent Police. The HR Partner participated in the shortlisting process and observed the presentation and interview processes in order to ensure the Panel's compliance with agreed policies and procedures.
- 3.13 Following completion of the formal selection process, each of the candidates also had an informal discussion with Jane Gardner (the Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner). Though this part of the process was not formally scored, feedback was provided by the DPFCC which informed the assessment panel's overall deliberations.
- 3.14 The proposed candidate performed to a high standard in all elements of the process, demonstrating strong technical and communication skills. She was very well prepared for the process and had clearly undertaken extensive research of key strategic documents beforehand. Her responses were well structured, and she demonstrated a high degree of emotional intelligence as well as technical

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competence.

- 3.15 As well as performing well during the selection process, Ms. Berry has extensive financial leadership experience in both the private and public sectors, including more than 10 years at Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC). She has previously fulfilled a Head of Finance role for the Dementia Adventure Trust and is currently the Interim Head of Finance for the Essex Wildlife Trust. She also has wider influence in the financial sector, including as a member of the Bank of England's Decision Maker Panel (DMP). Ms. Berry's full curriculum vitae is attached for the Panel's information at Appendix 3.
- 3.16 Taking all of the above into account, the PFCC has determined that the proposed candidate has met or exceeded the required criteria and proposes to appoint Julia Berry as their Head of Finance.
- 3.17 The terms and conditions on which the candidate is to be appointed

This is a full-time, permanent role attracting a salary ranging from £52,788 to £59,688. If appointed, the candidate will be contracted on the same terms and conditions as other PFCC staff and will be required to adhere to all applicable policies and procedures.

The post is designated as politically restricted in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government (Political Restrictions) Regulations 1990 and as set out in Schedule 16 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

Vetting clearance is a prerequisite of employment and, if appointed, the candidate will be subject to a vetting assessment every 12 months. National security vetting clearances are reviewed every five years.

## 4. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Head of Finance Job Profile  
Appendix 2 – Head of Finance advert text  
Appendix 3 – Julia Berry's Curriculum Vitae